



U.S. House of Representatives

Committee on the Judiciary

F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., Chairman

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News Advisory

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Voting Rights Act Hearing Tuesday on Bilingual Ballots Section

What: Oversight Hearing entitled, "The Voting Rights Act: Section 203 – Bilingual Election Requirements, Part I"

Who: Subcommittee on the Constitution – Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), Chairman

When: 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 8, 2005

Where: 2141 Rayburn Building

In 2007, several provisions of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) will expire, including Section 203, the provision authorizing bilingual election assistance to language minorities.

BACKGROUND...

- ✓ To date, counties and townships in 30 different states are covered by Section 203. These covered jurisdictions are required to provide voting materials such as notices, forms, instructions, ballots, and other materials in a covered language in addition to English.
- ✓ Testimony received by the National Voting Rights Commission reveals that Section 203 has been an effective tool in enabling those citizens who have limited English proficiency skills to fully participate in the political process. Proponents of Section 203 cite the advances made by language minority citizens in increasing voter registration levels and in electing candidates of their choice, but note it is still a necessary condition for effective voting access by many language minorities in covered jurisdictions. Opponents to the Section believe that the provision diminishes the importance of learning the English language

THIS HEARING WILL...

- ⇒ Examine the continuing need for Section 203.

WITNESSES: Hon. Brad Schlozman, Acting Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, Department of Justice; Ms. Margaret Fung, Executive Director, AALDEF; Ms. Linda Chavez, President, One Nation Indivisible; and Hon. Rebecca Vigil-Giron, Secretary of State, New Mexico.

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